

## **SHARe II Talking Points for the HIV/AIDS Leadership Messaging Training: July 9, 2012 Lusaka**

- On behalf of the SHARe II staff and on my own behalf, I would like to first of all thank you for responding to our invitation to attend this workshop – we humbled and truly grateful to you.
- I would also like to welcome you to this workshop which as aimed at equipping your royal highnesses to correctly and appropriately provide HIV/AIDS leadership not only in your chiefdoms, but also at national level
- Sadly, our beautiful country is now dealing with mature HIV/AIDS epidemic. An estimated 1.5 Million Zambians are living with HIV.
- The devastation of HIV/AIDS on human level has been profound on our country. We have lost so many of our people to HIV/AIDS.
- The Zambian Government has demonstrated its commitment to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic through:
  - The establishment of the National AIDS Council and its decentralized structures at the Provincial and District levels;
  - Adoption of the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Policy;
  - The establishment of a Cabinet Committee of Ministers on HIV and AIDS;
  - Mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in major national development plans and programs such as the Sixth National Development Plan and Vision 2030

- Bilateral partners have also contributed to the national response. Donor funding provides over 80% of the funds for the HIV treatment program in Zambia and for HIV prevention
- This is good because we do need donor help to treat our people now. However we must be very mindful that in a world economy that is increasingly unstable, donor funding will not continue forever. What will we do when donor funding is no longer available?
- Going forward, the major challenges our country faces in the response to HIV/AIDS are the following: Treatment, Prevention, Mitigation
  1. Ensuring that all Zambians living with HIV have access to HIV care and treatment services – I know for some of our chiefdoms this is a challenge because of long distances to health centers and hospitals.
  2. Mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS by making sure that members of our communities most negatively impacted by the epidemic, particularly children orphaned by HIV/AIDS and other vulnerable children are taken care of.
  3. Preventing the further spread of HIV. It is only by enhancing HIV prevention efforts that Zambia can hope to reduce the social and economic costs associated with the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

All 3 require strong and visible leadership. All 3 require resources.

- Currently the number of new HIV infections in Zambia stands at 250 per day: 225 adults and 25 children. We simply cannot afford this kind of situation.
- If we continue at this rate we will not be able to afford pay for HIV treatment for all the Zambians that need it because HIV treatment is extremely expensive.
- We must therefore redouble our efforts to prevent the further spread of HIV. For Zambia, HIV prevention is not only a moral imperative; it is an economic imperative.
- To me, it is clear that we cannot win the fight against HIV/AIDS without involving our chiefs. We need your help in this fight.  
As our Chiefs:
  - You are the custodians of our traditions, customs and culture; we respect and we listen to you. You can provide leadership to stamp out harmful practices that perpetuate HIV/AIDS
  - You wield a tremendous amount of influence that can be used for the common good to address the drivers of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Zambia including, multiple concurrent partnerships, gender-based violence, and alcohol and substance abuse, and to help promote interventions that can offer protections against HIV/AIDS such as PMTCT and male circumcision;

- You are the vehicle through which community conversations and voices about HIV/AIDS can be integrated into the national and sub-national strategic plans – what are we doing as leaders to push our government to begin preparing for the eventual phasing out of donor funding for our HIV treatment programs?
- I know that many of you are non-health actors. In order for you to provide effective leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDS, you need appropriate and up-to-date information so that you can pass on the correct messages to your subjects.
- This is the main reason for our meeting this week. SHARe II in collaboration with NAC, developed an HIV/AIDS Messages and Talking Points Toolkit that you can use to guide you in what to say when address issues related to HIV/AIDS, specifically tailored to the epidemic in Zambia.
- We will also support translation of the messages to local languages and adapt them so that they are culturally appropriate and suitable for use at the local level.
- Finally, I wish to say that your presence here is a clear demonstration the seriousness you attach to the fight against HIV/AIDS. We look forward to a very productive partnership as we work together to fight HIV/AIDS in our country.
- THANK YOU!